

Further testimony to Dr. Parke :—

"On the 25th, the stockade was completed all round the camp, the ditch was approaching completion. Barttelot superintended the work on one side; Jephson, in shirt-sleeves, looked over another. Nelson was distributing the European provisions—share and share alike; our Doctor, cheery, smiling, anxious as though he were at a surgical operation, was constructing a gate, and performed the carpenter's operation in such a manner that I wrote in my diary that evening, 'He is certainly one of the best fellows alive.' Jameson was busy copying the letter of instructions. Stairs was in bed with a severe bilious fever."

A dissertation on some unsanitary surroundings is given as follows :—

"The refuse heaps of the little villages were large and piled on the edge of the bank. They were a compost of filth, sweepings of streets and huts, peelings of manioc, and often of plantains, with a high heap of oyster-shells. Had I not much else to write about, an interesting chapter on these composts, and the morals, manners of aborigines might be written. Just as Owen could prefigure an extinct mammoth of the dead ages from the view of a few bones, the history of a tribe could be developed by me out of these refuse heaps. Revelling in these fetid exhalations were representatives of many insect tribes. Columns of ants wound in and out with more exact formation than aborigines could compose themselves; flies buzz in myriads over the heaps, with the murmur of enjoyment; butterflies which would have delighted Jameson's soul swarmed exulting in their gorgeous colours, and a perfect cloud of moths hovered above all."

This is followed by :—

"On the 9th we gained, after another seven hours' toiling and marching, the villages of the Bakoka. Already the people began to look jaded and seedy. Skewers had penetrated the feet of several, ulcers began to attract notice by their growing virulence, many people complained of curious affections in the limbs. Stairs was slowly recovering."

CHARACTERISTICS.

"On the 24th, Mr. Jephson led the van of the column, and under his guidance we made the astonishing march of seven and a-half geographical miles, the column having been compelled to wade through seventeen streams and creeks. During these days Jephson exhibited a marvellous vigour. He was in many things an exact duplicate of myself in my younger days, before

years and hundreds of fevers had cooled my burning blood. He is exactly of my own height, build and weight, and temperament. He is sanguine, confident, and loves hard work. He is simply indefatigable; and whether it is slushy mire or a muddy creek, in he enters, without hesitation, up to his knees, waist, neck, or overhead, it is all the same. A sybarite, dainty and fastidious in civilization, and traveller and labourer in Africa, he requires to be restrained for his own sake. Now these young men—Stairs, Nelson, and Parke—are very much in the same way. Stairs is the military officer—alert, intelligent, who understands a hint, a curt intimation, grasps an idea firmly, and realises it to perfection. Nelson is a centurion as of old Roman times; he can execute because it is the will of his chief; he does not stay to ask the reason why; he only understands it to be a necessity, and his great vigour, strength, resolution, plain good sense is at my disposal, to act, suffer, and die; and Parke, noble, gentle soul, so tender and devoted, so patient, so sweet in mood and brave in temper, always enduring and effusing comfort as he moves through our atmosphere of suffering and pain. No four men ever entered Africa with such qualities as these. No leader ever had cause to bless his stars as I."

ARROW WOUNDS.

"Lieutenant Stairs' wound was one-fifth of an inch in diameter, an inch and a quarter below the heart, and the pointed head of the arrow had penetrated an inch and a half deep. The other men were wounded in the wrists, arms, and one in the fleshy part of the back. At this period we did not know what this strange copal-coloured substance was with which the points had been smeared, nor did we know what were its peculiar effects when dry or wet; all that the Doctor could do at this time was to inject water in the wounds and cleanse them. The 'old hands' of the Zanzibar affirmed it was poison extracted from the India-rubber (*Landolphia*) by boiling; that the scum after sufficient boiling formed the poison. A native declared that it was made of a species of arum, which after being bruised was boiled; that the water was then poured out into another pot, and boiled again, until it had left a strong solution, which was mixed with fat, and this was the substance on the arrows. The odour was acrid, with a suspicion of *asafoetida*."

[*Vol. II. will be noticed next week.*]

It is generally the idle who complain that they cannot find time to do that which they fancy they wish.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)